(d) Central financial assistance is extended for Tourism projects which are prioritised every year in consultation with respective State Governments/Union Territories depending upon their viability and availability of funds.

Proposals on agriculture submitted to WTO

*13. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have submitted its proposals to WTO on agriculture for the ongoing negotiations; and

(b) if so, the details of the significant elements of proposals to protect our agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI OMAR ABDULLAH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) India has submitted its negotiating proposals in the areas of market access, domestic support, export competition and food security under the Agreement on Agriculture, to the WTO with the objective of protecting its food and livelihood security and creating increased market access opportunities with a view to promote agricultural exports.

The main elements of the proposals are:

— Additional flexibility for providing subsidies to key farm inputs for agricultural and rural development.

— Clarifications on certain implementation issues, such as offsetting of positive non-product specific support with negative product specific support, suitable methodology of notifying domestic support in stable currency to take care of inflation and depreciation.

— Maintenance of appropriate level of tariff bindings on agricultural products in developing countries, keeping in mind

their developmental needs and high distortions prevalent in the international markets with a view to protect livelihood of their farming population. Also linking the appropriate levels of tariffs in developing countries with trade distortions in the areas of market access, domestic support and export competition.

— Rationalisation of low tariff bindings in developing countries, which could not be rationalised in the earlier negotiations.

— Separate safeguard mechanisms on the lines of Special Safeguard Clause including a provision for imposition of quantitative Restrictions to protect the interest of the domestic producers in the event of a surge in imports or a decline in international prices, as a Special and Differential measure.

— No minimum market access commitments for developing countries.

— Measures taken by developing country members for alleviation of poverty, rural development, rural employment and diversification of agriculture should be exempt from any reduction commitments.

— Rationalisation of product coverage of Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) by inclusion of certain primary agricultural commodities such as rubber, jute, coir etc.

— Product specific support given to low income and resource poor farmers should also be excluded from the Aggregate Measurement of Support (AMS).

— Flexibility enjoyed by developing countries in taking certain measures in accordance with other WTO covered Agreements should not get constrained by the provisions of AoA.

— Substantial reduction in tariff bindings including elimination of peak tariffs and tariff escalations in developed countries.

— Expansion and transparent administration of Tariff Rate Quotas pending their eventual abolition.

— Blue box measures, de-coupled and direct payments, as well

as Government financial participation in income insurance and income safety-net programmes in Green Box to be included in the Amber Box to be subjected to reduction commitments.

— Accelerated reduction in AMS so as to bring it below de minimis by the developed countries in three years and by the developing countries in five years.

— Elimination through accelerated reduction in export subsidies and disciplining of all other forms of export subsidisation such as export credits, export insurance and export guarantees etc.

— Abolition of Peace Clause for developed countries.

Posts created in the Ministry of Civil Aviation for propagation of Hindi as official language

*14. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the numbers of posts of Hindi Translators/Hindi Officers/Assistants created in the Ministry and its allied PSU/attached and subordinate offices for propagation of Hindi as official language and encouragement of Hindi correspondence;

(b) the number of such posts lying vacant and since when; and

(c) the reasons therefor and the steps taken to fill up such posts urgently?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) 172 posts.

(b) 50 posts.

(c) Action has already been initiated to fill up the posts lying vacant. Due to the non-availability of deserving candidates, in some of the offices/units action has been initiated second time also to fill up the vacant posts.